

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-65. (Canceled)

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67. (New) A method for effecting replacement of equipment in an industrial plant, implemented in a computerized system for automatic control of the equipment, said system including a software object representing the equipment, the method comprising:
storing information related to the automatic control of the equipment in the object;
performing functions of the equipment related to the information in the object;
obtaining and storing maintenance and monitoring information related to the equipment in the object;
determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on information in the object; and
initiating procurement of replacement equipment when it is determined that the equipment should be replaced.

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68. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on detected failures of the equipment.

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69. (New) The method of claim 67 or 68, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on calculations that include information related to condition monitoring.

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70. (New) The method of claim 67 or 68, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on calculations that include information related to the characteristics of use or loading of the equipment.

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71. (New) The method of claim 67 or 68, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on calculations that include information related to an amount of use of the equipment.

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72. (New) The method of claim 67 or 68, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the equipment is to be replaced based on calculations that include information related to an expected lifetime of the equipment.

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73. (New) The method of claim 67, further comprising the step of deriving the object from an object type, wherein instance specific data is used together with information in the object type to facilitate procurement.

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74. (New) The method of claim 67, 68, or 73, further comprising the step of determining to procure replacement equipment based on information presented by the object.

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75. (New) The method of claim 67, 68, or 73, further comprising automatically determining to procure replacement equipment.

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76. (New) The method of to claim 74, further comprising the step of carrying out the procurement of replacement equipment through e-procurement.

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77. (New) The method of claim 76, further comprising the step of carrying out the procurement in accordance with a standard e-procurement procedure.

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78. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein e-procurement schemes or other information required for the procurement is held by the object that represents the equipment.

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79. (New) The method of claim 74, further comprising the step of providing an approval stage for the procurement process.

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80. (New) The method of claim 79, wherein the step of providing an approval stage comprises the step of conditionally invoking the approval stage based on the procurement process exceeding a predetermined amount of money.

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81. (New) The method of claim 74, wherein the step of determining to procure equipment comprises the steps of:

negotiating a price of equipment; and
providing delivery conditions prior to placing an order.